

B O S T O N   B I S E X U A L   W O M E N ' S   N E T W O R K  
N E W S L E T T E R                      A U G U S T   1 9 8 3

The Network will hold its first FALL MEETING on September 14 at 8pm at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St. Plans for fall events will be discussed as well as the topic "Coming Out as Bisexual in the Gay and Straight Worlds." Also, a summary of the first Coordinating Committee meeting will be given and pictures of the Bisexual Contingent at Gay Pride March will be shown. All women are welcome, and those interested in forming new support groups will have the opportunity to do so after the meeting.

---

The Bisexual Women's Weekend in Provincetown is on! Rooms are available for the nights of Sept. 16, 17 and 18. Come for just the day on the 17th or stay the night! (Most people will opt for just the 17th or the 16th and 17th.)

There is space for 30 women at the Admiralty Inn. The cost is \$12.50 per person/per night, based on double, triple, or quadruple occupancy. You heard right--\$12.50, whether there are two, three, or four of us in a room. Think of this as an opportunity to meet new people!

Make a reservation with a friend, or if you need more information, call [REDACTED], a member of BBWN who is coordinating this event. She can be reached at the Admiralty Inn (1-487-0722).

The Jane Doe Band has invited us to the Pied Piper on the 17th and there will be lots of other fun.

Anyone interested in cruising to P-town can call Baystate Cruise Lines for schedules and information. We would like to coordinate car-pooling (see attached).

Please use the attached form to make your reservation to ensure your participation in this historic event! (Payment can be made upon arrival at the Admiralty.)

\*\*\*        \*\*\*        \*\*\*        \*\*\*        \*\*\*        \*\*\*        \*\*\*        \*\*\*

WATCH FOR DETAILS on upcoming Betsy Rose concert (who is a member of BBWN).

Also, watch for flyers and information on DANCEWOMEN - free-form, free-style dancing for women to a variety of taped music - coordinated by Stephanie Legatos (another member of BBWN).

\*\*\*        \*\*\*        \*\*\*        \*\*\*        \*\*\*        \*\*\*        \*\*\*        \*\*\*



BBWN Newsletter/2

Now, onto business...

With this first mailing of the BBWN Newsletter--the purpose of which is to keep each other informed--we have already run up against the problem of FUNDING. We hate to but need to ask you, our members, for donations to help defray the cost of mailings.

The Coordinating Committee met in August and decided to make all mailings in sealed envelopes, to insure privacy. This adds to the already high cost of printing and postage (a complete mailing, with 70 members and growing, now costs about \$20.00).

A contribution from each of you would help to cover costs. For your convenience, attached is a separate form that includes a space for financial contributions. Keep the Network alive, contribute today!

The Committee also has decided to limit the use of the mailing list, according to the desires of each member. We have received requests from various groups for our list - we will only give your name and address out if you say it's OK. Please check the appropriate box on the form.

For this mailing only, please send the attached form to:  
[REDACTED], c/o The Admiralty Inn, 156 Bradford St., Provincetown 026  
We will be getting our own mailbox soon in Harvard Square so that all can reach us.

The Coordinating Committee is open to new members. Please come to the Fall Meeting to find out more information, or if you're interested in working on a project.

Hope to see you there.



MAIL THIS FORM TO:

[REDACTED]  
The Admiralty Inn  
156 Bradford St.  
Provincetown, MA 02657  
(Phone: 1-487-0722)

I have enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_ to help defray the cost of mailing the BBWN Newsletter. Make checks payable to BOSTON BISEXUAL WOMEN'S NETWORK.

Please check one:

\_\_\_\_\_ I would like my name and address used only for BBWN mailings.

\_\_\_\_\_ I would like my name and address used for BBWN mailings and shared with other members.

\_\_\_\_\_ I would like my name and address used for BBWN mailings, shared with other members, and released to qualified groups and publications for mailings.

I would like to make reservations for \_\_\_\_\_ person(s) for the night(s) of Sept. \_\_\_\_\_ at the Admiralty Inn.

If you need a ride or can offer a ride to Provincetown, please check one of the following:

\_\_\_\_\_ I need a ride.

\_\_\_\_\_ I can offer a ride to \_\_\_\_\_ person(s).

I am interested in helping the Network with:

- \_\_\_\_\_ Fundraising dance
- \_\_\_\_\_ Fundraising concert
- \_\_\_\_\_ Mailings
- \_\_\_\_\_ Newsletter production
- \_\_\_\_\_ Social events

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

Suggestions:



Dear Sisters,

This is the second newsletter of the Boston Bisexual Women's Network. Those of you who received the first will notice its new format and increased size. Those who are new to the mailing list may need a brief introduction to our organization.

### HISTORY

In September, 1982, a support group formed out of an "Introductory" on bisexuality at the Cambridge Women's Center. Originally a group of eight, ranging in age from 23 to 36, we represented a broad spectrum of lifestyles and backgrounds. When we decided to "go public," we called ourselves the BiVocals.

Between the founding of the BiVocals and the founding of the Network, the Cambridge Women's Center held 4 more introductory on bisexuality and 3 more support groups formed. On May 7, 1983, the BiVocals threw a party for the members of these groups, other bisexual women, and fellow-traveling lesbians which drew over 40 women, most of whom signed our fledgling mailing list.

On June 1st, we called a founding meeting of the BBWN which was attended by 30 women. We decided to form an organization which would coordinate support groups, have general "consciousness-raising" meetings, sponsor social functions, educate people in both the gay and straight worlds about bisexuals, and be a vehicle for those who wanted to engage in political action as bisexual women. We agreed that our first action would be to organize a bisexual contingent for Boston's '83 Lesbian/Gay Pride March.

During the summer, we marched (under our own beautiful banner), partied, had our first Coordinating Committee (CC) meeting, and produced our first newsletter. On Wed., Sept. 14, our second general meeting was attended by 80 women who discussed the topic "Coming Out Bisexual in the Gay & Straight Worlds" with great enthusiasm. The following weekend, 15 of us travelled to Provincetown to a guesthouse run by one of our members for a fun-filled weekend, including great food and wild dancing at the Pied Piper.

### CONTENTS

This newsletter is particularly hefty because we have included a copy of the new Bi-Laws. Please read them. We have also reprinted an article on bisexuality (and BBWN!) which appeared in the 10/10/83 Boston Globe. You will also find included the minutes of the first 2 CC meetings; meeting announcement; the infamous "Bisexuality Insurance" cartoon, the famous BiVocals response and an explanatory article, "GCN and the Bisexual Question"; various announcements and requests for help, and our new membership policy. Please pay particular attention to the last of these!

One more bit of history - our weekend in Provincetown fell on Yom Kippur, a fact for which we apologize. As you will see, our Bi-Laws commit us to make our events available to all women and we hope that we will be able to do so from now on. We are currently looking for a wheelchair-accessible space and ASL interpreters as a step in this direction.

### THE FUTURE

Remember, this is your Network! If we are to grow, we need active participants. We would like to have dances and concerts, get involved in political action, begin a speaker's bureau, and a Bisexual Women's Archives, hold a conference, etc., etc. This can only happen if you get involved. If you do want to get involved, in big ways or small, drop us a line at P.O. Box 1534, Jamaica Plain, MA 02130, stating your interests, etc. Or, better yet, come to the General Meeting!

### GENERAL MEETING - Come One! Come All!

Our third general meeting will be held on Wed., Nov. 16, at 8pm in the basement of 186 Hampshire St., Inman Sq., Cambridge. There are buses which stop in Inman Sq. or you can walk from the Central Square T (up Prospect 6 blocks to Hampshire, then left). There will be time at the end of the meeting to form new support groups and announce social events.

### COORDINATING COMMITTEE

The next CC meeting will be on Sun, Nov. 20, in Somerville. If you are interested in coming, call Robyn at 628-4390 for directions. If you get her answering machine, don't forget to leave a time when you can be reached. Feel free to bring munchies.

### HELP!

Since we are now too large a group to be contained by the Cambridge Women's Center - remember, there were 80 women at our last general meeting - we need a new place to meet. Our temporary meeting place is in a basement which is not wheelchair accessible and doesn't have a bathroom (although the S&S and Rosies are resigned to women from meetings trooping in and out of their bathrooms). So... if you know of a comfortable (couches & stuffed chairs, no fluorescent lighting), large, wheelchair accessible, inexpensive space near the T, please drop us a line immediately, or, better yet, show up at the General Meeting and let us know. We are also looking for people interested in being ASL interpreters at the general meetings. Again, please drop us a line or come to the meeting.

### CONFIDENTIALITY

Members have raised two issues involving confidentiality. We have addressed the first in the Bi-Laws: since the vast majority of respondents to the questionnaire in the first Newsletter said that they only want their names, etc. used for confidential BBWN mailings, we have decided to limit access to the mailing (and phone) list to voting members of the CC on official business only. If you want to reach other people in the Network, you must place a listing in the Newsletter (see Listings).



The other issue involves printing names, addresses and/or phone numbers of people having meetings or social events at their homes. We hope to solve the first problem by finding a public space for CC meetings but for now one of our members has agreed to list her phone # and give directions to women who call. We are also considering a special Newsletter insert for members only, which will contain such information. If you have any other ideas, please let us know.

Remember, confidentiality is to be respected by all members. Don't gossip about your support group or who was at the General Meeting. And watch where your Newsletter goes!

• Gay Community News, April 23, 1983—

## gay-identified bisexuals

Dear GCN:

We are a group of radical gay-identified bisexual women who have been meeting together for almost a year. At the risk of seeming humorless, we would like to point out some problems with the "bisexuality insurance" cartoon which appeared in the April Fool's issue of GCN.

1) The joke seems to be directed not to but against bisexuals: most bisexuals would not find it particularly funny and most of us have found it hurtful. When we add to this our past experiences with similar incidents and the almost total lack of attention given to bisexuals in GCN, we can only conclude that one subtext of the cartoon is that bisexuals are not considered part of the gay community.

The fact that we too experience homophobic discrimination and violence in our lives isn't enough for some people. Lesbians have sometimes told us that this is because bisexuals won't commit themselves to a lesbian lifestyle or to lesbian feminist politics. We challenge the right of anyone to set these requirements. In fact, some of us are active and committed members of the "women's community." Others find the so-called lesbian lifestyle (is there really just one?) unattractive or disagree with lesbian feminism. So do many lesbians.

We insist that all people who are sexually attracted to others of the same sex are gay. All other characteristics are secondary. And if "gay" is used to refer only to those who have consciously chosen a "gay identity" many bisexuals are gay and many homosexuals are not.

2) The cartoon perpetuates two stereotypes of bisexuals which we find particularly painful. The first is that we are really "experimenting" heterosexuals. In fact, everyone in our group strongly identifies as bisexual — even though we range from being primarily attracted to women to being primarily attracted to men — and most of us have done so for years. For many of us it is as much "all women," as the cartoon puts it, as it is for any lesbian. Obviously the real problem which some lesbians have with us is not that we don't love women but that we haven't rejected men.

The second stereotype is that we are more lacking in compassion when we end relationships than lesbians are. This is bullshit. Sometimes bisexuals do leave women for men. We also leave men for

women, women for women, and men for men. But we don't leave our lovers any more cruelly or frequently than any other group. All too often we get left ourselves. Some of us are incredibly monogamous and tenacious, others promiscuous and restless. And sometimes we are assholes, just like some lesbians.

3) The cartoon is not only directed at bisexuals. It also exemplifies an attitude towards women in the process of coming out which is all too common: if you don't know exactly what you feel and want, if you're at all ambivalent, if you're not prepared to commit yourself totally to a lesbian identity, you should stay in the closet rather than "experiment." This attitude keeps some women in the closet their whole lives. We think the lesbian community should encourage any woman who thinks she might be gay to explore those feelings. We certainly do. This doesn't mean that we don't fear rejection — everyone does. Nor do we necessarily feel less than lesbians the particular pain which accompanies being left for a man. But we recognize that this pain comes from our oppression. We owe it to women who are trying to come out not to blame them for it.

All the members of our group identify as bisexuals not because we are clinging to "heterosexual privilege" but because we are proud to affirm the full range of our desires. Bisexuals do exist. The message we get from both the lesbian/gay community and the straight world is that either we don't exist or we shouldn't. We refuse to accept this any longer. We refuse to deny ourselves or to be silent and invisible.

We understand that years of pain and anger on both sides of the barriers which separate us from homosexuals cannot be wiped out with a few words. We also realize that humor might be a necessary outlet but we doubt that jokes about "bisexuality insurance" will help to dismantle those barriers. And they must be dismantled. Bisexuals are not the enemy: the enemy is institutionalized heterosexuality. And we must unite against it if our movement is to grow stronger.

The BiVocals (Doris, Joanna, Linda, Lucinda, Lisa, Marcia, Megan, Robyn)  
Cambridge, MA

A Service Announcement

**IT COULD HAPPEN TO YOU!!!**



... yes, you! Imagine yourself at home one evening with your own true love ...



... I'VE LOVED EVERY MINUTE I'VE SPENT WITH YOU! YOU'VE REALLY OPENED ME UP TO A WHOLE BUNCH OF REALLY AFFIRMING EXPERIENCES! I NEVER KNEW JUST YOU! MUCH OF A WOMAN I COULD BE, AND YOU SHOWN ME!! BUT I ALWAYS SAID IT WAS YOU, AND NOT ALL WOMEN, AND, WELL, I'M KINDA FEELING LIKE I WANT TO HAVE BABIES THESE DAYS, AND I DO STILL WANT TO BE INVOLVED WITH MEN, SO I GUESS I'LL GO BACK...




OH, NO! TOO BAD STAR DIDN'T HAVE ...

## BISEXUALITY INSURANCE


- Up to 3 lovers covered simultaneously!
- Double indemnity if lover takes up with your sibling!
- You may qualify for disability disbursement!
- Veterans and Senior Citizens!
- No one denied a policy on the basis of previous record!
- No fault!
- Low, low monthly premium!

Wow! How can I get coverage before something like this happens to me again??




... HERE'S HOW IT WORKS ...

SEND FOR YOUR FREE ESTIMATE NOW! IF YOU DECIDE TO JOIN, WE'LL SEND YOU EVERYTHING YOU NEED!



More months later ...



**YES!** SEND ME MORE INFORMATION ON HOW I CAN AVERT DISASTER AND BE SURE I'M COVERED FOR LOSS, THEFT, ETC.!

name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Mail form to: Lookweed Press  
Lookweed, PA.



## GCN AND THE BISEXUAL QUESTION

We are reprinting the BiVocals letter to Gay Community News and the cartoon which provoked it, because so many of our members have requested it. The cartoon appeared in GCN's 1983 "April Fools Wraparound." Lisa Orlando, a BiVocal who has been writing for GCN for a couple of years, also sent a personal letter to the staff protesting its insensitivity to the bisexual members of the gay community. As a result of these protests, GCN decided to do a series on bisexuality, beginning with an article on bisexual groups nationwide, currently being written by BBWN member Megan Morrison. This will be followed by a "theoretical" piece by Lisa Orlando and articles by supportive lesbians and non-bisexual gay men. In addition, this week's "Local Niches" column, by Warren Blumenfeld, is about BBWN! ("This Week" means the issue which hit the stands on 10/30, but is dated 11/5.)

We encourage everyone to subscribe to GCN and to send letters showing appreciation of their coverage. The more they realize that bisexuals are part of the gay community, the more responsive they will be. GCN is tremendously influential, since it is the weekly of the mixed lesbian/gay movement, both locally and nationally. It deserves both our support and our criticism. If you don't know where to pick up a copy - it's at lots of newsstands - call the GCN office at 426-4469 (Boston). Since we don't have the space or the money to do otherwise, we will let you know when GCN is publishing relevant articles but we will not be reprinting them.

## MINUTES OF THE COORDINATING COMMITTEE MEETINGS

First meeting: August 6, 1983.

Reporting minutes: Megan M.

Present: Johanna H, Megan M, Lisa O, Lucinda O, Sylvia S, Robyn T.

Agenda : -First fall meeting.  
-Provincetown weekend.  
-Network structure & By-law discussion.

The Committee decided to hold the first fall meeting on Sept. 14, 1983, at 8pm. The topic chosen for discussion was "Coming Out as Bisexual in the Gay and Straight Worlds." The task of locating a meeting place was assigned, and the potential locations were prioritized: 1) Cambridge Women's Center -- Robyn; 2) New Words Bookstore -- Johanna; 3) D.O.B. -- Megan. Publicity for the meeting would be handled by Sylvia and Megan, with notices to be placed in GCN, Bay Windows, Equal Times, Sojourner, Tab, Phoenix, and the Boston Globe Calendar; they would also post flyers around the city. Network member Betsy R would be asked to act as facilitator, with Megan doing introductions. Lisa would work with Megan & Betsy on specific questions for the discussion, and on procedure for the evening.

The Committee discussed Jenny T's invitation to host a party in Provincetown on the weekend of Sept. 16 & 17, 1983. The responsibility of coordinating the weekend was assigned to Jenny & Megan.

The need for a definite structure for the Network was discussed. Lisa O volunteered to facilitate the writing of a first draft of By-laws, along with other members, before the October meeting of the Coordinating Committee. It was decided that Lucinda O would purchase a Post Office Box for the Network.

The following people accepted responsibility for facilitating certain tasks:

- Facilitation of C.C. meeting -- Megan M.
- Corresponding Secretary -- Lucinda O.
- New York Correspondent -- Robyn T.
- Treasurer -- Sylvia S.
- Fundraising (including grant proposals)-- Lisa O.
- Affiliation with, and securing approval from, the Cambridge Women's Center to meet there regularly-- Sylvia S.
- Newsletter -- Sylvia S, with assistance from Stephanie L, Johanna H. and Megan M.

Second meeting: October 2, 1983.

Reporting minutes: Megan M.

Present: Betsy B, Marcia D, Johanna H, Lisa L, Megan M, Megan Mc, Lisa O, Lucinda O, Kari O, Sylvia S, Robyn T, Jean K.

Agenda: -Next general meeting.  
-Newsletter.  
-By-laws.

The Committee decided the next general meeting of the Network will be held on Nov. 16, 1983, at 7:30pm. Betsy B & Lisa L would facilitate finding a meeting place. Sylvia S & Megan M would do publicity. Megan M would facilitate a planning meeting, to decide upon procedure and questions. Topic chosen: "Conflicts and Commonalities with the Lesbian Community."

Sylvia S reported that she had established a checking account for the Network. The treasury had received a total of \$92 in contributions, and had expenses of \$37.90. She would provide a full breakdown of costs for future meetings.

Lucinda O reported she had secured a post office box for one year, at a cost of \$20. The address is P.O. Box 1534, Jamaica Plain, MA 02130.

Robyn T reported that the New York Network is having its first general meeting on Oct. 21. NYBWN had requested that one of our members come as a guest speaker. Unfortunately travel expenses could not be covered. No one was available to go. Robyn T agreed to act as liaison between all support and discussion groups. She would also put the membership list on computer and keep it up to date.

Lisa O requested permission to speak on behalf of the Network in conjunction with interviews for articles which will appear in the Globe and GCN. Megan M asked for permission to speak for the Network in an article she is writing for GCN on the bisexual movement in the United States.

Lisa O stated she would not be able to facilitate fundraising in the future. Since grant proposal deadlines had passed, decisions about this role were postponed.



Lisa O accepted responsibility for producing the next newsletter. A committee was established to work with her. Beyond producing the next newsletter, they would present a statement of purpose for the newsletter, and would propose prices for ads. They would also produce a "pamphlet" explaining the Network to hand out to new women.

Lisa O presented the first draft of the proposed "Bi"-laws. These were written by Megan M, Megan Mc, and Lisa O. After lengthy discussions on all parts of the draft, changes were made and consensus was reached. The new by-laws would be published in the next issue of our newsletter.

Membership dues were set at \$5 for truly needy, \$10 regular, and \$25 sustaining.

Problems associated with publishing members' addresses and phone numbers in the newsletter were discussed. Any ideas of how to solve this problem, of informing each other yet maintaining confidentiality, are welcome.

Everyone was encouraged to think of social events for the next C.C. meeting. THE NEXT C.C. MEETING WILL BE HELD ON NOV. 20 AT 3:00 (SUNDAY AFTERNOON) IN SOMERVILLE. Directions would be given out by Robyn T, whose phone number would appear with the announcement in the next newsletter.

ANYONE WITH AGENDA ITEMS FOR THE NOVEMBER COORDINATING COMMITTEE MEETING, PLEASE GIVE THEM TO MEGAN M AT THE NOV. 16 GENERAL MEETING, OR DROP HER A NOTE IN THE B.B.W.N. POST OFFICE BOX.

#### CALENDAR/ANNOUNCEMENTS

Jean K is planning a BBWN WEEKEND in Waterville Valley, NH (White Mountains) in November or early December. There will be a limit of 10 people. If you're interested, call her at work, 437-1600 x310. She will arrange carpooling. Remember, this is a work phone, so be discreet.

THE BIVOCALS GO COED! On October 19, Lucinda gave birth to a 7 lb. 3 oz. boy named Pier. We're all in love with him and looking forward to a new voice at our meetings.

Don't miss Warren Blumenfeld's "Local Niches" column on BBWN in this week's Gay Community News! (See the above article, "GCN and the Bisexual Question")

Friday, Nov. 4. WOMEN & EMPOWERMENT: An Evening of Music and Workshop to Benefit Mel King. Featuring our own Betsy Rose and Ann Neitlich. Cost \$8 (\$5 limited income). In Brookline, wheelchair accessible, for further information call 646-9392.

CONFERENCE ON BISEXUALITY - Spring '84 in Hartford, Ct. Looking for organizers/facilitators to help with conference. Call Jane (203) 232-7059 or Mary Sue (203) 727-0479.

NOTE: A policy regarding the Calendar/Announcement section of our Newsletter will be established at the next Coordinating Committee Meeting. In the interim, listings can be sent to our P.O. Box. Please include your phone number so that we can contact you if necessary.

## BOSTON BISEXUAL WOMEN'S NETWORK

### BI-LAWS

#### ARTICLE I. Name, Mailing Address

The name of the association shall be the Boston Bisexual Women's Network. It shall maintain as its mailing address P.O. Box 1534, Jamaica Plain, MA 02130.

#### ARTICLE II. Purposes

The purpose of the association is to bring together women in order to:

- (1) provide a safe environment which will enable all women to explore new sexual options without feeling pressured to commit themselves to a particular sexual orientation or lifestyle, and which will support and validate the self-acceptance of bisexual women. Such an environment is currently difficult for women, be they bisexual, lesbian or heterosexual, to find. The association is committed to making this environment available to and safe for women of all classes, races, ethnic origins, religions, marital status, ages and abilities.
- (2) organize and empower bisexual women to struggle within the gay community for full acceptance, and within the society as a whole for the acceptance of bisexuality and the liberation of all gay people.
- (3) serve as an umbrella organization for support, discussion, education, outreach, political action and social groups related to bisexuality and to facilitate their formation.
- (4) facilitate the exchange of information and ideas on sexual options both locally, nationally, and internationally.
- (5) provide social functions for its members and their friends as a means of building bisexual solidarity.

The association shall not be operated for profit. No part of its net earnings shall inure to the benefit of any private individual.

While the association itself excludes men, some of its functions may be open to men at the discretion of the Coordinating Committee.

#### ARTICLE III. Mailing List

- (1) Any woman may receive the newsletter of, or any other information from, the association by placing her name on the mailing list. Membership is not necessary to be on the mailing list.
- (2) The mailing list shall remain confidential and be available only to voting members of the Coordinating Committee acting in an official capacity. No names, addresses or phone numbers shall otherwise be released.

#### ARTICLE IV. General Meetings of the Association

- (1) General meetings of the association shall take place at least once every three months at a place, date and time to be set by the Coordinating Committee.
- (2) General meetings of the association shall be open to all interested women.
- (3) Notice of general meetings shall be published in the newsletter and in all relevant publications. General meetings may also be publicized with flyers and posters.



## ARTICLE V. Membership in the Association

- (1) Membership in the association shall be open to women who meet the dues requirement set by the Coordinating Committee. Dues must be reasonable and a sliding scale must be set.
- (2) Members are eligible to attend Coordinating Committee meetings and to acquire voting privileges.
- (3) Members shall be eligible for discounts whenever the association charges a fee.

## ARTICLE VI. Affiliation

- (1) An affiliated group may be any support, discussion, education, outreach, political action, and/or social group involved with the issue of sexual options.
- (2) Any other group may affiliate with the association at the discretion of the Coordinating Committee.

## ARTICLE VII. Coordinating Committee

- (1) The business of the association shall be managed and directed by a Coordinating Committee, which shall have the powers of a board of directors. The Coordinating Committee shall fix all fees, dues and assessments, direct the disposition of association funds and generally act for the association in all matters, provided, however, that all the powers conferred by this Article of the Bi-Laws shall be exercised subject to all other provisions of these Bi-Laws, to the Articles of Organization and to the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.  
The Coordinating Committee shall publish the newsletter of the association, plan and run the general meetings, deal with correspondence, do fundraising and publicity, coordinate affiliated groups, facilitate communication, encourage new groups to form, recruit new members, and plan the future of the association.
- (2) The Coordinating Committee is open to all members of the association.
- (3) After the initial three [3] full meetings of the Coordinating Committee, voting privileges on the Coordinating Committee are restricted to those members who have attended two [2] out of the previous three [3] of the Coordinating Committee meetings. Members who have acquired voting privileges and then lost them through missing two [2] consecutive meetings may regain them after attending one [1] meeting or by the decision of the other voting members.
- (4) A quorum shall consist of six [6] members with voting privileges.
- (5) The Coordinating Committee may establish additional committees of members of the association or of members of the Coordinating Committee and shall appoint facilitators of such committees. The Coordinating Committee shall have the authority to fix the duties and responsibilities of such committees. Such committees shall act under the supervision of the Coordinating Committee. Such committees may be ongoing or temporary. Members of all such committees may be removed at any time by the Coordinating Committee and any and all such committees may be terminated at any time by the Coordinating Committee.
- (6) Coordinating Committee meetings shall be held at such times and places as are necessary and convenient to carry on the business of the association. Notice of meetings shall be given to all members of the association by mail one week in advance of the meeting.

- (7) The Bi-Laws of the association may be amended by a unanimous decision of the Coordinating Committee at the second meeting after the amendment has been presented. Notification of this meeting and the proposed amendment must be published in the newsletter immediately following the meeting at which the amendment is proposed.
- (8) The Coordinating Committee may lend its name only and not that of the entire association to any organizations, coalitions, petitions, or actions it wishes to endorse.
- (9) Only voting members of the Coordinating Committee may speak for the association in an official capacity. Any member wishing so to speak must receive the approval of at least six [6] voting members of the Coordinating Committee. All statements should be made in consultation with other members of the Coordinating Committee.
- (10) The minutes of all Coordinating Committee meetings shall be published in the newsletter of the association.
- (11) The Coordinating Committee shall use a consensus decision making process and shall strive to reach consensus at all times. Except as stated in Article VII, paragraph (7), and in Article VIII, paragraph (2), if consensus cannot be reached, any voting member may propose that a three-quarters [3/4] majority decision making rule be put in place. Approval of such a proposal shall require a three-quarters [3/4] majority.
- (12) Any three [3] voting members of the Coordinating Committee may call a meeting to deal with urgent business. A sincere attempt must be made to notify members of the time and place of the meeting at least twenty-four [24] hours in advance of the meeting.

## ARTICLE VIII. Rules and Regulations

- (1) The Coordinating Committee shall enforce the observance of these Bi-Laws and of all amendments hereto, and may make from time to time and amend and repeal such rules for the government and welfare of the association as may seem to it expedient and as shall be consistent with these Bi-Laws, or any amendments hereto, and shall enforce the rules so made.
- (2) Any member may have her membership revoked by a unanimous vote of all members with voting privileges who shall state in writing the reasons for such removal. Any member so removed shall have the right to have this decision put to a vote of all members, regardless of voting status, who may overrule the Coordinating Committee by a two-thirds [2/3] majority of members choosing to vote.

NEED A ROOMMATE? I am looking for an apartment near the T; in Cambridge, the North End, the Back Bay, Brookline, or maybe Brighton. I am allergic to pets and do not smoke, but would be delighted to find a friendly household. I can be reached at home weekdays 6:45-8:00am as well as evenings, at [REDACTED], or at work, [REDACTED]. Ask for [REDACTED]. (Can pay up to \$250/month.)



## MEMBERSHIP

If you think the Network is important, PLEASE become a member. Membership dues are currently our major source of income. Our expenses have escalated rapidly and we are still paying back the money loaned by some of the founders to get us off the ground.

We now send the Newsletter to over 160 women, which means that the cost of xeroxing, envelopes and stamps has more than tripled since our last issue. Since 80 women attended our September General Meeting, the Cambridge Women's Center can't hold us any longer, so we must begin meeting in spaces which charge a fee.

We also need money just to grow. We now pay for a post office box and would like to get an answering service as soon as possible. If we want to sponsor other events, from dances and concerts to conferences, we will require "front" money for publicity, etc.

As you can see in the Bi-Laws, we decided that the Newsletter should continue to be free, and we also want the general meetings to be free if at all possible. As our major means of outreach and recruitment, Newsletters and meetings should be available to as many women as possible, especially to those who are not yet ready to make a commitment to the organization.

But we also wanted to give people incentives, besides sheer enthusiasm, for becoming members: members get discounts at all events or any other time the network charges money (such as when we sell T-shirts!) and can participate in decisions about the present and future of the organization by attending Coordinating Committee meetings. We are also considering a special newsletter insert for members only which will have information on "non-public" social events, i.e., potlucks, etc.

So, get out your checkbooks!

\*\*\*\*\*

BBWN  
P.O. Box 1534  
Jamaica Plain, MA 02130

YES! SIGN ME UP! I WANT TO BE A: ☐ Contributing Member \$25

☐ Regular Member \$10

☐ Truly Needy Member \$5

☐ I have enclosed a contribution of \_\_\_\_\_ in addition to my dues.

☐ I am not interested in becoming a member at this time but would like to contribute \_\_\_\_\_ for the Newsletter.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

THANKS!



# Bisexuality

*Toward a new understanding of men, women and their feelings*

By Arthur Kroeber  
Contributing Reporter

**H**e calls himself Jeffrey. When he was about 20, he became aware that he was equally attracted to men and women. He felt guilty. His sexuality was, he says, "a cross I had to bear." He did not give his homosexual urges any outlet, and at 26 he married. He was honest with his fiancée about his dual inclinations, and she, although willing to take the risk, harbored a fear that Jeffrey would someday have a homosexual affair.

After five years of marriage, he did. "My first physical relationship with a man occurred with a very close friend, a childhood friend," he says, "and it was in a way much more a kind of affirmation of the intensity of our psychological relationship rather than an expression of an intense desire for an erotic relationship with a man."

He told his wife. She was shocked and upset, and she became depressed. But she says she did not feel rejected, nor did she reject Jeffrey. She asked to discuss the matter, and after a painful internal debate he agreed. "I felt that in the long run," he explained, "I didn't want to keep any secrets — life is too short to keep secrets from the person I want to share my life with."

It took months of difficult discussion to resolve the issue, but Jeffrey and his wife stayed together and have since weathered two more of Jeffrey's homosexual affairs — relationships he was open about with his wife. They have a satisfactory sex life and two adolescent children. As time has gone on, Jeffrey's wife has grown more accepting.

"She sees this," Jeffrey says, "as another dimension to her husband's personality, one which isn't destructive for him or for the relationship."

The label a sex-conscious American society would pin on Jeffrey is "bisexual."

As a label, by and large, it is generally used to describe people confused about their sexuality, people on the verge of "coming out" as homosexuals, popular androgynous entertainment idols and convention-flouting pleasure-seekers.

While upholders of conventional morality consider bisexuality a "perversion," many politically conscious gays see it as a cop-out for homosexuals who do not want to admit their true feelings. In either case, it is not considered a "valid" form of sexual expression.

However, bisexuality has been examined recently by many in the health professions as well as many gays, and new conclusions are evident.

These conclusions revolve around the thesis that human sexuality is a many-splendored and often ambiguous thing, a changing ocean of possibilities that defies attempts to divide it into separate, permanent, warring territories.

There are, in fact, so many ways in which one can be "bisexual" that the very label is misleading, implying as it does a definite third option between heterosexuality and homosexuality.

The diversity of meaning in the term bisexuality — and the suspicion with which bisexuality is viewed by both straights and gays — has made research extremely difficult. Many bisexuals are married or have professional positions that might be threatened if their sexuality were revealed. Others may have suppressed one or another of their preferences. In either case, bisexuals are not willing subjects for research. All the people

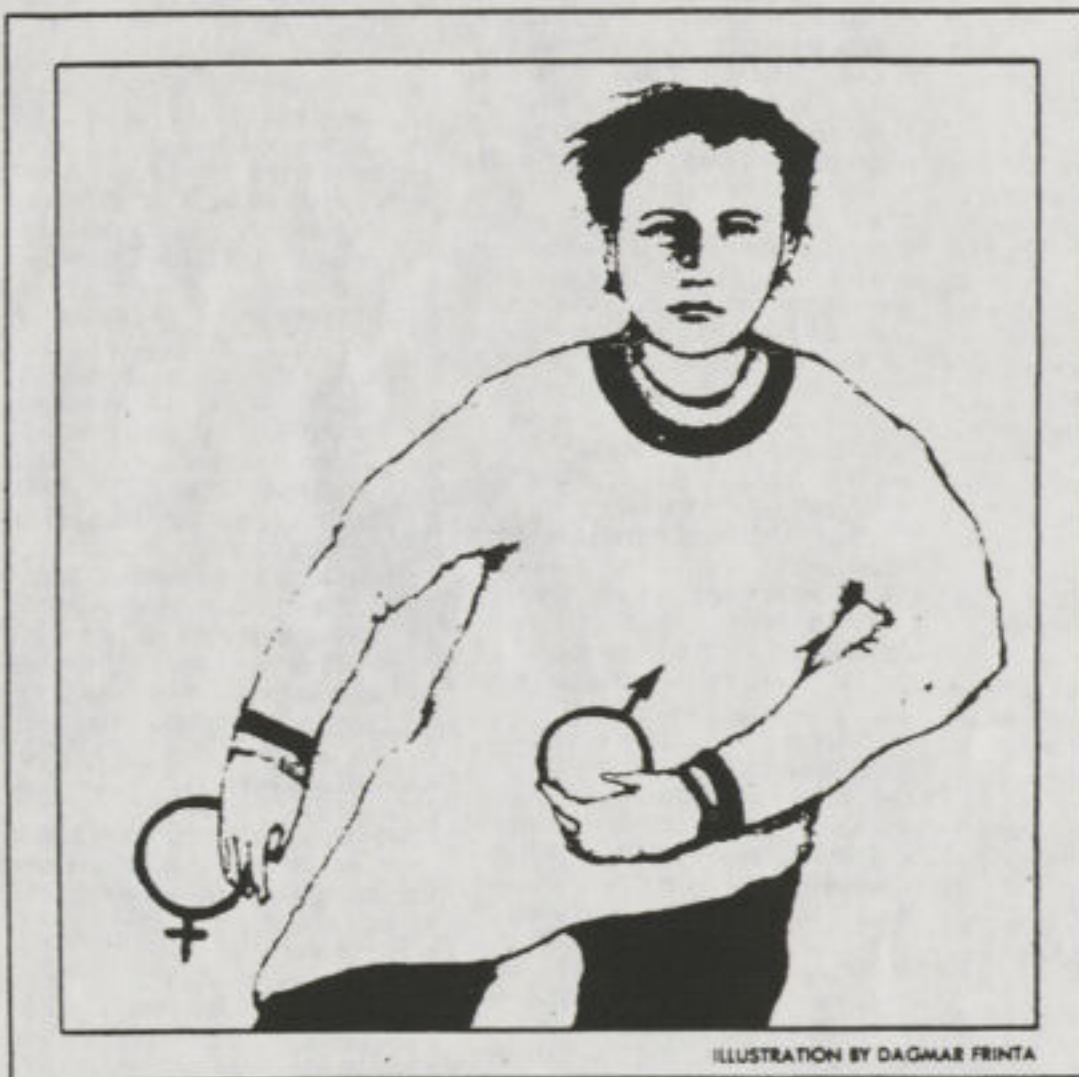


ILLUSTRATION BY DAGMAR FRINTA

What almost everyone can agree on is that there are people who have and enjoy sexual relationships with members of both sexes, and that both the mainstream and the gay communities are ill-prepared to deal with them.

whose life stories are recounted in this article requested that their names be changed.

Conversations with bisexuals, gays and straights, and with therapists in the Boston area who have dealt extensively with the phenomenon of bisexuality indicate that people with such leanings tend to divide into two fairly distinct categories: those who seek support in the gay community and those who do not. The former are generally politically active and have a lifestyle similar to that of many gays; the latter may be respectable householders like Jeffrey or, more free-wheeling — some might say "swinging" — people.

What almost everyone can agree on is that there are people who have and enjoy sexual relationships with members of both sexes, and that both the mainstream and the gay communities are ill-prepared to deal with them.

□

"It's important to realize," says Eric Rofes, chairman of the Boston Lesbian and Gay Alliance, "that this is really happening, that there really are suburban housewives out there having lesbian relationships who are torn because they still have affection for their husbands. Bisexuality does exist as an honest part of people's lives."

The urgency of bisexuality as a personal

problem is stressed by Gary Drake, a Brookline therapist who specializes in counseling bisexuals. "I guess what I would emphasize is, first, there is such a thing, and it has a thousand manifestations. Second, there's not support in the culture for the expression of these relations... Third, they are the most vulnerable population. For gays, coming out is no picnic, but bisexuals have more pressures on them."

"Probably the biggest misconception facing bisexuals," says Drake, "is that they are actually homosexual, and that they won't come out of the closet. In this sense they're dismissed by both gays and straights."

"What's happened in straight-gay politics," says bisexual freelance writer Lisa Orlando, one of the founders of the Boston Bisexual Women's Network, the area's only formal support group for bisexuals, "is that a lot of it followed interest-group/minority politics. There was a need for gays to define themselves clearly as an interest group. They had to build a gay community, and bisexuals became a threat to that community."

Whatever one's views of homosexuality were, therefore, the tendency was to view sexual orientation as an either/or proposition. Bisexuality became a code word in both gay and straight circles for the gay

BISEXUALS, Page 54



# Toward a new understanding of bisexuality

## ■ BISEXUALS

Continued from Page 52

who was just beginning to come to grips with his true sexuality. "Most gay people have used the label 'bisexual' as the first toe in the water when they're coming out," explains Drake. "A lot of people, gays particularly, are very cynical about bisexuals — they see them as closeted people."

Rofes concedes that, although "lesbians and gays are more sensitive to sexual differences than is the general population," nevertheless "some gay people are reluctant to accept bisexuality as a valid sexual orientation."

"As a result of societal oppression," he continues, "people have needed to see sexual orientation in terms of exclusive categories. As gay people's self-understanding has developed — and as society's understanding has developed — we have begun to see sexuality as more fluid than perhaps we'd like to realize."

The gay-bisexual confrontation is also a profoundly political one, with overtones of class antagonism.

Cindy Patton, managing editor of the Boston-based Gay Community News, explains that at the beginning of the 1970s — a period she defined as the cusp between the gay liberation movement and the onset of the "me generation" — a small group of bisexuals, the so-called "swinging singles" caught the eye of the media, and that's what people got to know about bisexuality. "I don't think they represented the majority," she said.

"There was a political conflict between gay liberation and the swinging singles. Those people (the singles) tended to be rather class-privileged and got various benefits from society. By saying you were bisexual, you could hook yourself into those benefits in society, whereas by saying you were gay you cut yourself off."

As a result, she says, defining oneself as gay came to mean a great deal more than what kind of sex one had: It meant setting oneself off from mainstream society, taking on a different set of values, sacrificing the material benefits of society for the emotional benefits of

a smaller community. It was a commitment.

So, Patton says, "a lot of gay people felt threatened by people who had not made the same kind of commitment. The prejudice is that bisexuals have no place in the gay community. The most damaging thing is that this attitude, which goes back to the 'swinging singles' era, is what predominates right now."

□

Yvonne, a bisexual, started out heterosexual, passed through a hippie phase en route to becoming a radical lesbian feminist in the early '70s, and now, at age 35, is a professed example of what Patton says is daily becoming a more common kind of person: the "gay-identified bisexual." These are people who, although they have sexual relationships with people of both sexes, like the support and more importantly, the cultural attitudes, of the gay community and so identify themselves as part of it.

Yvonne is also an example of how multifarious bisexuality can be. "My sexuality is a potential, not an identity," she says.

"I don't think it ever crossed my mind until I was 18 that I was attracted to women," recalls Yvonne. "I lived pretty much in novels throughout my teen years, and, of course, all the relationships in novels are heterosexual."

"When I was 18, this woman I had a tremendous crush on told me that she was a lesbian and her best friend was her lover. I wasn't shocked or anything, but I felt intense jealousy. There wasn't any fear, but I felt, 'Oh, boy, this is something new about myself.'"

"Then I was a hippie for about five years, and hippie society was very straight, so if I had a crush on a woman, I wouldn't tell her for fear of being ostracized."

"Then I got involved in the women's movement. I identified myself as a lesbian. When I came (to the women's movement), the only excuse for not being a lesbian was incurable heterosexuality. The idea of being bisexual seemed like a total betrayal of politics."

If Yvonne — who now lives with a man and has a married female lover — represents the bisexuals of

## Many questions, but few answers

Bisexuality remains the one area of human sexuality that has not been researched with any degree of thoroughness. Little progress has been made, in fact, since Alfred Kinsey and his colleagues at the University of Indiana produced "Sexual Behavior in the Human Male" in 1948 and "Sexual Behavior in the Human Female" six years later.

"The problem," says Brookline therapist Gary Drake, "is that most bisexuals are not open to research. To preserve their marriages, their social position, or their self-esteem, bisexuals are unlikely to 'come out' in public, and unlike gays they have few support groups."

For example, in Boston, one of the leading centers of the gay community in America, there is one support group — the Boston Bisexual Women's Network. Founded last spring, it has 70 members in five discussion groups. (For more information, write Box 1694, Jamaica Plain, Mass. 02130). There are no groups for bisexual men. Only four books in the Boston Public Library deal explicitly with bisexuality. There are few qualified therapists with experience in counseling bisexuals.

Estimating the number of bisexuals is not almost impossible task, both for the reasons noted above and because such an estimate presupposes an adequate definition of the term. In "Sexual Behavior in the Human Male," Kinsey and his colleagues recognized the flubbing of di-

versity of human sexuality when they wrote: "It is a fundamental of taxonomy that nature rarely deals with discrete categories. Only the human mind invents categories and tries to force facts into separate pigeonholes. The living world is a continuous trench and every one of its aspects. The sooner we learn this concerning human sexual behavior, the sooner we shall reach a sound understanding of the realities of sex."

The Kinsey group devised a seven-point scale with exclusive hetero- and homosexuality at the two extremes and five points in the middle. Twelve percent of Kinsey's male sample and 7 percent of his female sample fell into the three center points of the scale. Although most therapists interviewed accepted Kinsey's figures, a critical re-examination of the Kinsey reports, Morton Hunt's "Sexual Behavior in the 1970s," accuses Kinsey of having exaggerated the percentage of homosexuals and suggests a figure of 3 percent for gays and a similar figure for the middle of the spectrum. The extremely unscientific "Hite Report on Male Sexuality" reports that "6 percent of the respondents had and enjoyed sex with both men and women."

Any such figures, of course, fail to take into account the people who, for one reason or another, conceal their sexual experience or preference, as well as those whose preferences change over time.

— ARTHUR KROEBER

intense political commitment who have made their peace with the gay community. Ann, a woman of about 30, represents others who stay outside the gay movement and find their support elsewhere.

Some might call Ann a "swinging single," but she sees her bisexuality as an expression of her ability to find deep emotional commitment with people of both sexes.

"I have always been open intellectually to being involved with women," she says, "but until last year I was never actually drawn to one." Now, she says, "I'm much more heterosexual in orientation, but I want the option of expressing myself sexually in all ways."

Last year a deepening emotional relationship with a close female friend finally culminated in sexual relations. At the same time, they were both having sexual affairs with the same man.

The resulting unorthodox configuration, or "tri-relationship," might be viewed as a simple excuse for promiscuity, but Ann sees it differently. "What we're all involved in is exploring what happens when you go beyond possessiveness."

"Sex," she says, "is almost incidental — well, not quite," she corrects herself quickly. "It's an avenue of expression. It provides the space for surrender. There is something about going beyond your own ego which is really tremendous."

Ann's lifestyle — about which she admits "obviously most people don't feel as loose as I do" — is precisely the kind of life that draws angry fire from both upholders of the traditional family and exponents of the doctrine of gay commitment.

Ann's attitudes also exemplify the great differences between male and female bisexuals — differences that probably have less to do with their bisexuality than with their gender.

"In my experience," says Drake, "most bisexual men have a clear sexual preference, which is generally homosexual. That is, all other things being equal, what turns them on sexually is another man. It's very different with women — I have spoken to any number of women who did not distinguish between the sexual turn-on provided by men and women. There is," he concludes, "a greater difference between men

and women than between homosexuals and heterosexuals."

Patton puts it more bluntly: "Men are much more focused on sex, women on relationships." As generalizations go, this one seems to hold up fairly well.

And according to Patton, one of the greatest advantages of the gay movement has been to make people more conscious of these differences. The prime beneficiaries of this consciousness, in her view, are women. "Women can say now, 'It's all right for a relationship not to be the only relationship of my life — I can have different levels of intimacy, and it's OK to have sex with someone I'm not deeply emotionally involved with.'"

□

But having the potential for affairs with members of both sexes does not make it impossible for a bisexual to sustain a long-term emotional commitment. According to Drake and most other therapists, bisexuals who have good relationships with their spouses do not destroy their marriages by revealing their sexual orientation. "My experience," says Drake, who has counseled mostly men, "is that if the relationship has been good — and it very often is — and if there is a child, and if the man is affectionate and sexually responsive, then the wife doesn't want to give him up." It isn't clear if the same pattern holds up for married bisexual women, as very little research has been done.

Bisexuals do have special problems. They are subject to isolation, lack of sympathy and misunderstanding. And the problems are most acute for those who don't have the money to pay an expensive therapist or whose education or cultural background doesn't permit them to take a free-and-easy attitude toward homosexuality.

Outside large cities such as New York, Boston and San Francisco, those problems are not likely to go away until sex stops being seen as a dangerous force that must be channeled into a monogamous relationship. "The issue," therapist Francis Giambone says flatly, "is not bisexuality or homosexuality, but sexuality period."

